

# Indiana State Prison Staff Get Fit

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Michigan City, IN - (November 15, 2006) - The Indiana State Prison are taking advantage of Governor Mitch Daniels INShape Indiana initiative. Staff have worked hard and donated their own time to renovate an older building into a modern recreation gym and fitness area. Recently, the fitness area was completed with some new and donated equipment.

Getting in shape and staying healthy has become contagious at the 146-year old maximum security prison. Correctional Officer Charles Ritchey is an excellent example of a person changing his life style for the better. Officer Ritchey made a new year's resolution to lose weight and improve his health. Ten months later and 100 pounds lighter, Charles has done just that. When asked how he accomplished such a task, Charles said "I made sure that the calories going in were less than the energy I expended." Using this theory, he walked 6 miles each day and 20 miles on weekends.

"I am proud of staff efforts at the Indiana State Prison for this important initiative," said J. David Donahue. "I have challenged all Department staff to lead a healthier lifestyle and all facilities have jumped on board. I am amazed by some of the creative programs which are designed to promote

healthier eating habits and consistent workout routines for offenders and staff."

Prison staff even created team competitions to see which group could lose the most weight. Each quarter, facility events are coordinated to include fun runs and walks to encourage staff to lose weight and get into shape. Recently, staff raised over one thousand dollars for Riley Children's Foundation by sponsoring each other as they walked at an all day event at a local park and running tract. One correctional officer walked 35 miles in a 10-hour period.

This new attitude toward fitness has helped some staff who have more physically demanding jobs. This summer, correctional officers patrolled the perimeter on bikes instead of driving vehicles. The decision to utilize bicycles instead of cars was done to save money due to rising gas cost. Shortly after it began, the perimeter post was one of the most popular jobs for offices to work at the prison. "Being healthy helps our staff feel good and allows them to perform their duties more effectively." said Superintendent Ed Buss.

Offenders at the Indiana State Prison are joining the fitness initiative. "A healthy offender means fewer trips to the hospital inside and outside the facility." added Buss.

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J. David Donahue, Commissioner



Officer Charles Ritchey after losing 100 pounds.

## About The Department of Correction

The Department employs over 8,000 employees and houses 24,000 adult and juveniles in 32 facilities, ranging from minimum to maximum custody, prison camps, juvenile facilities and work release centers. The Department's home page on the Internet can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection>. The Department's Re-entry Site can be found: <http://www.reentry.in.gov>.

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